

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing amendments be made prior to examination of the present application.

The applicants sincerely appreciate the allowance of claims 1-15. By way of this amendment, new claims 16-39 have been added, to further define the invention. Please note that reference numbers have been retained in claims 1 to 15, but have no effect on claim scope. MPEP § 608.01(m).

The undersigned understands that Examiner Leary has considered the relevancy of co-pending application serial no. 09/944,917 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0048747) and the prior art cited therein. An Information Disclosure Statement is being filed concurrently herewith to make this co-pending application of record.

The Examiner should feel free to contact the undersigned, if there is anything the undersigned can do to expedite prosecution of the application.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By _____

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Version With Markings To Show Changes Made

Marked up Specification

Page 3, last paragraph:

It is a further object of the invention to [describe] provide an apparatus for laser microdissection which allows a sample field to be reliably cut out of a specimen, and which dispenses with any defocusing of the laser beam to carry off the specimen.

Page 10, first paragraph:

To prepare for the cutting operation, a narrow cut width of laser beam 7 is then set. During cutting, X-Y stage 2 is then displaced in steps in such a way that laser beam 7 successively strikes the calculated reference [position[s]] position(s) on specimen 4, the reference position for web 26 initially being omitted. In each reference position, a respective trigger signal is generated by computer 16 and sent to laser 6, and a laser pulse is correspondingly emitted by it. In this fashion, the discontinuous cut line 25 that is depicted is generated with laser 6 around specimen region 23 of interest. Specimen region 23 of interest is then joined to the surrounding specimen 4 only by the stable web 26.

In the Claims:

1. A method for laser microdissection of specimen regions (23) of interest of a specimen (4) that is mounted on a specimen holder (3), characterized by the following steps:

a) cutting, with a focused laser beam (7) having a defined cut width, along an incomplete cut line (25) largely enclosing the specimen region (23) of interest, such that there remains between the beginning and end of the cut line (25) a stable web (26) of defined width by way of which the specimen region (23) of interest is joined to the surrounding specimen (4); and

b) severing the web (26) with a [single] laser pulse, directed onto the web (26), of a focused laser beam (7) having a cut width enlarged as compared to the previous cutting[, such that after severing, the specimen region (23) of interest falls down by the action of gravity].

6. An apparatus for laser cutting of microscopic specimens (4)
[comprises [sic]] comprising:

a microscope (1) having at least one objective (9) that defines an optical axis (10), for viewing of a specimen (4) having a specimen region (23) of interest, and having a laser (6) that generates a laser beam (7) and at least one optical system (13) that couples the laser beam (7) into the objective (9), wherein

a) a cut line control unit (2; 31) is associated with the microscope (1) in order to generate a relative movement between the laser beam (7) and the specimen (4) to achieve an incomplete cut line (25) largely enclosing the specimen region (23) of interest, such that there remains between the beginning and end of the cut line (25) a stable web (26) of defined width by way of which the specimen region (23) of interest is joined to the surrounding specimen (4); and

b) means for severing the web (26), with which the cut width of the laser beam (7) is enlarged and a single focused laser pulse is directed onto the web (26) and severs the web (26), are provided.

15. (Amended) The apparatus as defined in Claim 6, wherein means for selection of the location of the web (16)[[sic]] by a user are provided.